Riches rightly improved.

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

FUNERAL

Of the Great and Charitable Benefactor

Edward Colston, Esq;

Who departed this Life at his House a *Mortclack*, the 11*th* of *Oct.* 1721. in th 86*th* Year of his Age.

By John Hargrave, D. D.

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He hath diſperſed, he hath given to the Poor, his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever; his Horn ſhall be exalted with Honour.

ALTHOUGH our Pilgrimage through this Vale of Tears and Miſery, is only a State of Tryal, and not of Rewards or Puniſhments; yet the Lord, (even in this Life) is many times pleaſed to exerciſe his Juſtice and Goodneſs in a great Degree, partly for the Conviction of Atheiſts and Infidels, and partly for for the Great Encouragement of his Saints and People, King *David* tells us from the Mouth of God, *the Wicked ſhall not live out half their Days.* And indeed, we find it ſo by daily Experience; for alas! how many are cut off in their Prime

and Bloom, in the Height of their Sins and Iniquity, and hurried ſtrait to Perdition without Repentance or Grace, having long deſpis'd the Goodneſs and Forbearance of God, and reſiſted and griev'd the Strivings of his Holy Spirit.

But as for the Righteous, it is quite otherwiſe with him, *his Seed ſhall be mighty on Earth, and the Generation of the Upright ſhall be bleſſed. Wealth and Riches ſhall be in his Houſe, and his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever: becauſe he hath diſperſed, and given to the Poor, his Horn ſhall be exalted with Honour.*

THESE are the promiſed Bleſſings in my Text, which were fully made good to our late moſt noble and generous Benefactor, for tho' his Bounty and Munificence was frequent, large and extenſive, his Abundance was no ways exhauſted, the inviſible Hands of God gave a conſtant ſupply to his Store, like the Widow's Meal and Oyl; and indeed, he knew no Want, but that of more Veſſels wherein to depoſite the Overflowings of his Charity and Beneficence.

To be any ways particular in the vaſt Sums he has expended for the Glory of God, and the Relief of the Neceſſitous, is morally im-

impossible, for he often endeavour'd (according to our Saviour's Direction) *not to let his Left Hand know, what his Right Hand distributed*; yet nevertheless, his publick Benefactions were so surprisingly great, that even this and future Ages will scarcely Credit, how so immense a Treasure could be amass'd together by one private Gentleman, or that his Munificence could extend to such various Uses and Occasions, and not incumber his Estate, or any way lessen his Stock; for we find that at his Death, he largely Augmented his former Gifts and Endowments, and added nobly and generously to his primitive Deeds of Charity; and yet his Coffers full and plenty, as tho' the Lord had opened the Windows of Heaven, and shower'd down Riches like Manna upon him.

HOWEVER, it must be allow'd, he was a Person of great Diligence and Industry, and the Lord gave a Blessing to all he did, and prosper'd all he took in Hand; as he did *Joseph* in the House of *Pharaoh*, or *Jacob* with his Father-in-law *Laban*: And therefore he, in a grateful Return to the Lord for his Goodness, set apart a *Large Share* of his Increase for the Service of God, and the Use of the Poor and Helpless, For,

FOR, first he wisely and Early consider'd *That every good Gift proceeds from the Lord*; and therefore he seriously studied in what Manner he might make the best Returns to his dear and bountiful Father, for all his gracious and tender Dealings with him; and accordingly knowing that the Poverty of the Clergy, and the Meanes of the Places of Divine Worship, were great Incentives to bring our most Holy Religion to be slighted and disesteem'd, he often added Generously to the Livings of the Former, and either freely Built or Beautify'd the Latter.

HEREIN he seem'd to imitate, and add to the Royal Bounty of our late most Dear and Gracious QUEEN of ever Blessed, Sacred, and Glorious Memory; who was a true and tender Nursing Mother to her Church and People; who in her Life Time had no thing more at Heart than the Glory of God and the Welfare and Happiness of her Subjects: Witness the Great and Princely Provision she made for those who serve at the Altar; many of whom before were hardly furnish'd with common Necessaries equal to the meanest Mechannick: Also her Indefatigable Care to have the Houses of God

Sacred

sacred to Divine Worship built, repaired or beautified.

To return, in the next Place, his diffusive Charity extended to the Poor and Indigent both of Youth and Age: For besides those in this Place that share in his Bounty and Goodness, he erected several *Hospitals* in *Bristol* (the Place of his Nativity) some Temporary and others perpetual, with ample Endowments: In one of which are Twenty Four venerable Antient People, of both Sexes, whom the Frowns of Providence, or wodrly Casualties have brought low, or made decrepid by Old Age, and unable to subsist by their own Labour: There they have a sweet and pleasant Retirement from the Earthly Cares and Troubles of this Life, and have nothing to do but fit and prepare themselves for a blest Eternity, having a Chaplain allow'd, with sufficient Maintenance for that Purpose.

In another Hospital he has made Provision for an Hundred pretty Boys, who (being either Orphans, or their Parents not able, by reason of their many Children and scanty Fortunes, to subsist them decently) have their Food, Raiment, and Learning, with a competent Sum to put them Apprentices with-

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al; and Money when out of their Times from his Bounty and Goodness: So that his Love and Charity exhibited towards them both in respect of their Souls and Bodies, is very great and Exemplary. How Lovely Sweet, Neat, and Clean do they now appear that otherwise, perhaps, might lurk the Streets in Rags, Filth, and Nastiness? How gloriously now do they *sing the Praises of the Holy One of* Israel, *in the Assembly of his People*, that otherwise might belch forth the Language of Hell, in horrid Oaths and Imprecations? And how probable is it now that by being grounded in the Principles of the Christian Religion, according to the *Church of England*, and qualified for Business with many Useful Branches of Learning, but they may become worthy Members of the Common Weal; and may in Time wear Scarlet and Velvet, that otherwise might likely prove the Pest of the Nation.

THUS if we do but reflect on the Greatness or the manner of his Charity, nothing can surpass it, but infinite Perfection itself; for first, it is not done to a Few, or for a short time, but to great Numbers of Old and Young and to be continued for ever; having so or-

der'

r'd his Settlement, that no Age or Vicis-
ude of Things can fruſtrate, or put a Period
his glorious Deſigns and Intentions. Se-
ndly, 'twas done in his Life time, his own
yes having the pleaſant Satisfaction of ſeeing
e happy Fruits of his great Munificence:
e did not graſp the World, 'till he could
old it no longer, like ſome Avaritious
retches, who would aſſoon part with their
lood, as their Wealth.

NEITHER did he make *his Will unwil-
ngly* (as an Ingenious Man terms it) No,
ut as freely gave to the Poor as the Lord
id give it to him; and would often Religi-
uſly as well as Pleaſantly affirm; *I am but
hriſt's Steward to diſtribute among his Mem-
ers ſwhat he gives me in Truſt.*

WHEREFORE we may, without the
aſt Preſumption, hope and believe he is now
aping the Fruits and Rewards of all his
ood Deeds, among the Heavenly Hoſt, An-
els and Saints, Cherubims and Seraphims,
nd all the antient Patriarchs, Apoſtles and
iſciples; and that he has been welcomed into
he glorious Preſence of the Father of Spirits
y our Lord Chriſt, with thoſe indearing
xpreſſions, *Come you Bleſſed of my Father,*

inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from t
Foundation of the World.

THIS heavenly minded Gentleman took o
Lord's Direction in the pureſt Senſe, *Luke*, xv
ix. *Make to your ſelves Friends of the Mamm*
or Riches *of Unrighteouſneſs, that when y f*
they may receive you into everlaſting Habitation
and alſo, that Evangelical Advice of our Sa
our's, *Matt.* vi. xix, xx. Not to lay up Tre
ſure for our ſelves in this Life, ſubject to a thou
ſand Miſchances, but ſend them before us
Heaven, *where neither Moth nor Ruſt doth co*
rupt, and where Thieves do not break through an
ſteal.

AND yet 'tis very ſtrange and ſurprizing, tha
all the Graces and Virtues of this brave an
good Man, were not ſufficient to ſcreen hi
from the Malicious Invectives of envious, de
ſigning People (not to ſay worſe) who wer
pleaſed to aſperſe him with opprobious Terms
and baſe Detractions; among the reſt, that al
his Great and Charitable Benefactions were don
with a *Phariſaical* Intent to gain Popular Ap
plauſe; and that in Reality he was a *Papiſt*, and
devoted to the *Church of Rome*, with other Slan-
ders not worthy to be mention'd: But thoſe
that have had the Honour and Happineſs to be
in the leaſt acquainted with him, know thoſe
to be Tales and Fictions fomented by Satan, in
order to blacken the Character of this Great and
Good Man: Alſo the Subjects of his *Lentl*
Lecture being equally levell'd at *Popery* and

naticism, are a plain Indication and Specimen the Orthodoxy of his Faith and Principles, be- always riveted to the *Church of England*, ne- swerving from her Opinions, nor declining Ordinances, zealous for her Rights and Pri- leges, and fervent and devout in all her Reli- ous Exercises.

'Tis astonishing to consider, how smooth and en he always appear'd under these *Reproaches*, great Soul not being mov'd or ruffl'd in the ft Degree with the ungrateful Returns of ne who either have, or possibly may be glad share in his Bounty and Charity; for tho' y carry their Heads never so high at the pre- nt; yet alas! the time may come, when they theirs may be brought low and necessitous, d then be obliged to prize and crave the Ef- ts of his benign Generosity and Mu- ficence. For do we not daily perceive, how any Families of all Ranks and Stations, by me Vicissitude of Fortune, or unlucky turn of ffairs or Other, are often reduced from Riches d Splendor to the lowest Ebb of Misfortunes d Poverty, both suddenly, and too often un- pectedly.

This our Benefactor wisely consider'd, and ok the most prudent Method to secure his ealth and Treasure, by lending it unto the rd, whom he stedfastly believ'd would repay m with large Interest at the great Day of Re- ibution, and to the Praise of his never dying emory; he was never better pleas'd, than

when his noble Gifts and Benefactions had any ways ſtir'd up a Spirit of Emulation in Others to do as he had done before them.

AND therefore (without impious Ingratitude) we can never detract from his pious and noble as well as charitable Deeds and Actions; or ſufficiently commend and extol the Graces and Virtues wherein he daily abounded. If it be praiſe worthy to promote the Honour and Glory of God to our utmoſt Power, both practically in our ſelves, and by encouraging it in Others, and ſparing no Coſt or Pains for that Purpoſe; or *to be a Father to the Fatherleſs and to plead the Cauſe of the Widow*; or to comfort the Comfortleſs and ſorrowful; or to help the helpleſs and Indigent; or to feed the Hungry and cloth the Naked, or any other good Work; then Mr *Colſon's* Name and Fame ſhall never be forgotten, but ought to be continued down to all Poſterity. If we ſearch the Annals of former Ages we ſhall ſcarcely find any Private Man ſo bountiful, liberal and charitable; and I ſhrewdly fear, ſucceeding Generations will hardly produce his Equal.

'Tis true, indeed, in the Infancy of the Goſpel, religious Converts ſold their Poſſeſſions and laid the Purchaſe at the Apoſtles Feet, *Act.* 4. 37. *having all things in common*, in order to ſupport the Poor of the Church; And that as *Euſebius* in his Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory informs us the Primitive Chriſtians freely and gladly contributed to the utmoſt of their Power an Abilit

to build, inrich, and beautifie ſtately Edifices for the Worſhip and Glory of God, allowing large and honourable Maintenance for thoſe who ſhould Adminiſter the word and Sacraments; yet this brave and generous Spirit of our fore-Fathers in the times of Popery, being abuſed to ſuperſtition and Idolatry, the ſubtle *Monks* and *Fryers* impoſing on the Credulity and Devotion of the People, drain'd the publick Wealth to erect *Cloyſters*, *Convents*, and *Nunneries*, Nurſeries of Idleneſs and Debauchery; which being eraz'd and demoliſh'd when our *glorious Reformation* began, we unhappily ran from one Extream to another; for ſome *Fanatick* Zealots, to avoid Superſtition (forſooth) were for downright Sacrilege; as if there was no Mean to be found between being Gorgeous and Decent, or Luxury and Poverty: And therefore this Spirit of Giddineſs, or worſe, in the laſt Age, prevail'd to that Degree, that the Prieſtly Order became Contemptible, the Livings and Benefits of the Clergy, eſpecially in Rural Cures, being ſcarce ſufficient to keep them from Abſolute Poverty.

This mov'd our late moſt gracious Sovereign (as was obſerv'd before) to her immortal Praiſe and Memory, out of her Princely Wiſdom and Regard for the Honour and Glory of God to provide for the future, that thoſe who were devoted to the Work of the Miniſtry, ſhould have reaſonable Subſiſtance; well knowing, that when once the Clergy became deſpicable, Religion

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of Course is slighted and undervalued. And Indeed, this the Heathens in all Ages, as well as *Jews* and *Turks* and *Christians* rightly consider'd, always making ample Provision for their *Druids*, *Brachmans*, *Priests*, and *Pontiffs*; giving them large Stipends and Sallaries, exempting them from Taxes, Customs, and Wars, with many other Rights and Privileges.

And truly our noble and worthy Benefactor, wherever he went, never fail'd to imitate and follow her Royal Example, Generously distributing immense Sums for that Purpose, in several Places; sometimes raising of Churches from the Ground, as he has done here, without any other Contributions, and settling a Liberal Endowment to carry on Religious Worship in the same; bestowing on other Churches Presents of Communion-Plate, repairing and beautifying others, as he saw Need or Occasion, augmenting the Sallaries of those that were low and Deficient, and for ever encouraging Lectures, and other pious Parts of Divine Service: Which how pleasing these Works appear in the Eyes of the Lord, may be gather'd from *Luke* vii. v, vi. When the Elders of the *Jews* besought our Saviour to heal the Centurion's Servant, saying he was worthy for whom he should do that Favour; they urg'd the Reason thereof in these Emphatical Words, *For he loveth our Nation, and hath built us a Synagogue*; and thereupon he went and did according to their Desire.

Thus through the whole Course of his Life, he fully made up the Character given of a righteous Man in my Text, viz. *He hath dispersed, and given to the Poor and did even enjoy the promised* Reward in this Life, of *having his Horn exalted with Honour*, being always blest with Health and Wealth in Abundance; strong in his Constitution, sound in Judgment; quick of Apprehension, and very vivacious to the last, although arrived to such an advanced Age; whose Memory shall be for ever bless'd by all those who have any sence or Regard to God, or Goodness, Piety or Virtue, Generosity or Charity; in which gracious Qualifications he was a glorious Instance and a shining Example. Oh! that all others who are rich in Possessions would tread in his Steps, and follow his ways *that while they have time they may do good unto all Men*, Gal. vi. x. And as they are rich in this World, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal Life.

As for this Good Man, who is the Occasion of our mournful Solemnity, beyond all Doubt he is gone to Rest, and is now reaping the Fruits of all his Deeds, and Labours of Love. *Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his*, Numb. xxiii. x. He has now left the Fatigues and Anxieties of this troublesome Life, and is receiv'd into the Joy of his Lord, who wipes all Sorrows and Tears from his

his Eyes, and *because he was Faithful over a few Things, he now makes him Ruler over many Things.* with Crowns of Joy on his Head, and Branches of Palm in his Hand in token of Victory; having the loving Society of Angels, and *the Spirits of just Men made perfect.* And if Souls abstracted from their Bodies, have any Knowledge of Things here below by *Intuition* (as the Schoolmen term it) or otherwise, it will highly augment and increase his Eternal Happiness, to know and reflect on the unparrelell'd Good he has done in his faithful Stewardship.

Good Lord, give us Grace to follow his blessed Example, and bring us all to that happy State and Condition whither he is now gone before us; and this we beg for the Sake, and in the Name of thy Son and our Saviour Jesus Christ, Amen.

FINIS.

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